

AGENDA ITEM 11: Delta Plan Chapter 7 Amendments - Delta Levee Investment Strategy (DLIS)

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Requested Action: **Receive update on DLIS and consider comment letter on Chapter 7 amendments to the Delta Plan**

Background: The Commission voted unanimously at its November 15, 2015 meeting to adopt a levee policy developed by the Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC). This policy was subsequently forwarded to the Delta Stewardship Council. This policy stated:

- 1) The unique Delta values (cultural, recreational, natural resource and agricultural) shall be considered for all levee funding decisions.** [Rationale: “Delta as Place” considerations should be elevated in the current DLIS principles, which are largely focused around levee improvements in densely-populated areas of the Delta. The law requires consideration of all of these statutorily listed Delta values.]
- 2) Protecting levees is essential to protection of Delta roadways for emergency response.** [Rationale: Important Delta roadways (including many miles of State highway) are located on top of levees in the interior Delta. These roadways provide a critical function in emergency response (public safety and flood evacuation). Maintaining these routes for emergency response is an important reason to ensure funding for Delta levee improvements in the Primary Zone.]
- 3) The best available data for informing levee investments must be used or retrieved.** [Rationale: There has been concern over the data utilized for the DLIS; in some instances the data has either been older or outdated (such as capturing recent levee improvements) and in other instances it has undercounted residences and other built improvements on Delta islands.]
- 4) Retain the Delta levee subventions program in its current form.** [Rationale: The Delta levee subvention program has been very successful at ensuring maintenance of Delta levees. Over time, with the successful completion of many projects, a plan seems to have emerged for bringing Delta levees up to standard. Ending or modifying this program in a way that would deprive rural levee maintaining agencies of funding would be a disservice to Delta as Place and the important values in the primary zone.]

The Delta Stewardship Council released a discussion draft of proposed revisions to Chapter 7 of the Delta Plan (Reduce Risk to People, Property and State Interests in the Delta) at its

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December 15, 2016 meeting. The Council's intention is to gather comments on the discussion draft (aided by community meetings scheduled for January 17 in Stockton and January 24 in Walnut Grove) and discuss the proposed revisions as early as the Council's meeting on February 23, 2017. Upon approving final changes to the discussion draft, the Council will conduct CEQA review prior to adoption of revisions to Chapter 7, perhaps in early 2018.

Commission staff has been reviewing DLIS documents and the proposed revisions to Chapter 7 of the Delta Plan in anticipation of preparing official comments for the Commission's consideration. The Council has already heard a strong endorsement of DWR Delta levee programs (especially the Delta Levees Maintenance Subvention Program, but also the Delta Levees Special Projects Program) from a variety of knowledgeable parties both within and outside the Delta. This idea is proposed to be included in the Commission letter, as well as a request for greater consideration of "Delta as Place" values and other

Requested Action: Direct staff to make any changes to the proposed Delta Stewardship Council letter on proposed amendments to Chapter 7 of the Delta Plan (Reduce Risk to People, Property and State Interests in the Delta).